UNIT 2 MONITORING OF CSR PROGRAMMES

Structure

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Monitoring of CSR activities helps corporations in learning from past experiences, improving delivery system of CSR activities they undertake, systematic planning and optimizing resource allocation and measurement of results as a part of accountability to the key stakeholders. However well a CSR programme or project has been conceived and planned, if the implementation is not proper, it will result in inefficient and wasteful loss of resources. A number of CSR programmes and projects have been undertaken in various sectors particularly in agriculture, rural development, health and family welfare, education, women and child development, drinking water and other related poverty alleviation programmes. Review of these projects suggests that monitoring and appropriate mid course corrective measures are central to achieving project goals. In the light of the above, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is increasingly recognized as an indispensable tool. There is a wide felt need to improve the performance of CSR projects. M&E provides a basis for accountability in the use of resources and is an integral and important part of the CSR project cycle.

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain what, why, when and how of monitoring CSR programmes.
- Identify key elements in monitoring CSR programmes.
- Discuss various types of monitoring of CSR programmes.

2.2 MONITORING

The word "monitor" is derived from the Latin word meaning to 'warn'. Monitoring is a continuous / periodic review and surveillance by the CSR department at every level of the implementation of an activity to ensure that input deliveries, work schedules, targeted outputs and other required actions are proceeding according to plan. Availability of a 'plan' is a pre-condition for monitoring.

Another way of defining Monitoring is that it is a process of measuring, recording, collecting, processing and communicating information to assist project management decision-making. To be precise and brief, "monitoring system is an information system for management decision making".

According to Shapiro "Monitoring is the collection and analysis of information as a project progresses. It is aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of a project. It is based on targets set and activities planned during the planning phases of work. It helps to keep the work on track and can let management know when things are going wrong. If done properly, it is an invaluable tool for good management and it provides a useful base for evaluation."

According to PSO "Monitoring is the systematic collection, analysis and use of information from projects and programmes for the following basic purposes:

- Learning from the experiences acquired

- Accounting internally and externally for the resources used and the results obtained, and

- Taking decisions.

The CSR department requires following information to keep track of CSR programme and to guide its course of action:

1. Diagnostic information (why a situation is as it is)

2. Implementation information (physical and financial or input information)

3. Utilization information

4. Impact information

5. Situation information, and

6. Information for review.

Top management receives information from the monitoring unit and from other formal and informal sources. This influences programme implementation, leads to better CSR programme planning, and ensures sustainability of those programmes. Ultimately this leads to improving the ability of CSR departments to make effective use of available human and financial resources.

2.3   SCOPE OF MONITORING IN CSR

Monitoring is a CSR department function, which begins with the start of a project and ends with the completion of the project, but it is a continuous process during the implementation of project. The key requirement for monitoring is an 'ACTION PLAN' without which monitoring is not possible. The scope of monitoring is summarized in the Box 2.1.

Box 2.1: Scope of Monitoring		
What?	Check, review, overview, keep track, observe, control, guide, correct, inspect, supervise, verify, feed-back, follow-up of the:	Progress in implementation of CSR core programme activities with reference to action plans.
Why?	To ensure successful implementation of the core activities by identifying shortfalls, deviations, problems and the reasons.	Take appropriate corrective/ remedial action to keep the activities on track.
When?	During the implementation of the activity continuously/ periodically.	From inception till completion
Who?	By the CSR team at different levels	Including beneficiaries (participatory monitoring)

Since monitoring is a management function, all CSR department key functionaries involved in the activities will do the monitoring. When all stakeholders of CSR, including beneficiaries are involved in monitoring, then it paves way for participatory monitoring, which is desirable.

A CSR project's operation, performance, and impacts are the aspects of concern in monitoring with a view to keep track on the technical and economic 'efficiency' of the project. This is carried out in terms of:

• Whether the various tasks are carried out according to schedule;

• Whether project results are likely to lead to realization of project objectives; and

• Whether project objectives / targets / execution needs adjustments.

During the process of monitoring and evaluation cycle, we identify the shortfalls, deviations and problems and causes for the same so as take appropriate remedial /corrective action (Fig. 2.1).
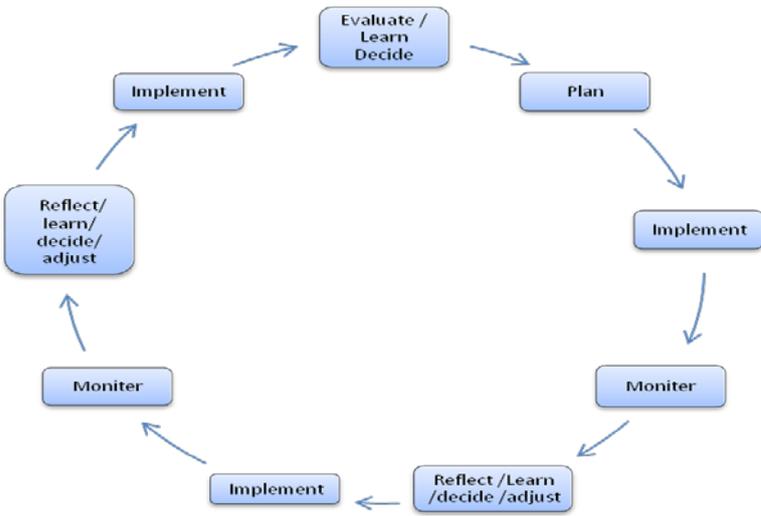
Fig. 2.1 : Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle

(*Source: Shapiro, J. Monitoring & Evaluation*)

Till now you have read about the meaning and scope of monitoring, various gamuts of monitoring and monitoring and evaluation cycle. Now answer the questions in Check Your Progress-1.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : (a)   Write your answer in about 50 words.

   (b)   Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1.   What do you mean by monitoring?

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2.   What information is required by CSR department to keep track of CSR programme.

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2.4 CONCEPTS AND ELEMENTS IN MONITORING

2.4.1 Concepts in Monitoring

Four concepts are basic to monitoring and evaluation. They correspond, respectively, to (Ruthenburg, 1985, p. 120):

a) Operational investment (Capability) (e.g., investment in CSR activity per beneficiary family)

b) Operational efficiency (e.g., the number of visits, meetings, demonstrations, and trials, per CSR worker)

c) Technical efficiency (e.g., the number of adopters, output, and value added)

d) CSR induced changes (Impact) (e.g., production, productivity, income, and income distribution)

In the above, the capability, effectiveness, and efficiency fall in the monitoring domain. Impact falls in the evaluation domain (Casey and Lury, 1982).

i) **Capability** is the command that CSR programme has over physical, financial, and human resources, enabling it to serve its clients. It is reflected by CSR outreach, intensity, technical competence, and physical and financial resources. The CSR department's performance depends directly upon its capability.

ii) **Effectiveness** is the degree to which CSR goals are attained. CSR activities have many goals such as:

- Social goals (e.g., welfare of beneficiaries)

- Economic goals (e.g., increased income)

- Operational goals (e.g., physical and financial targets)

Among them, operational goals are of special significance because their attainment makes realization of other goals possible.

iii) **Efficiency** is usually measured by the rates at which beneficiary target group adopt recommended developmental practices. Adoption rates of varying degrees of complexity can be conceived.

iv) **Impact** can be measured by a simple indicator, like yield of a crop per hectare, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR). Such indicators provide ultimate tests for the success of any sectoral CSR programmes like agriculture, helath and family welfare etc.

2.4.2 Elements in Monitoring

Let us now discuss in detail the various elements of monitoring. The purpose of a programme is to convert a set of RESOURCES into desired RESULTS.

Resources are INPUTS and results are OUTPUTS and OUTCOMES (This term is used here in a generic sense though it has more specific connotation which will be discussed later). Inputs to outcomes happen in a sequence as detailed below:

i)   **Input:** Goods, funds, services, manpower, technology and other resources invested in a CSR project with the expectation of OUTPUTS.

ii) **Results:** Certain things happen immediately, and certain things ultimately, while certain things in between these two (intermediate). According to this sequence, results can be grouped into three broad categories, such as productivity, production and income.

iii) **Output** (Immediate results)**:** Specific products or services, which a CSR activity is expected to produce from its inputs in order to achieve the set objectives (increased irrigation, health facility created etc).

iv) **Effect:** It is the outcome of the use of the project outputs above. The realization of expected effects in a project will lead to desired impact – Intermediate results. In the recent M&E literature effects, are described as outcomes.

v)   **Impact:** It is the outcome of project effects or ultimate results (broad long term objectives – e.g. Standard of living and reducing poverty both at individual and community level). Impact is described as the outcomes for a community or region than on individuals. It may include direct and indirect as well as primary, secondary and tertiary level (See the Box 2.2).

Box 2.2: An Example of Watershed Irrigation Project Monitoring		
Let us assume a watershed irrigation dam has been built as part of CSR activity and has become operational. A sequence of results flow are discussed below.		
Sequence of Results		*Parameter*
Immediate Result(s)	INPUT	Watershed Irrigation Dam
	OUTPUT	i) Irrigated Area ii) Change of crop pattern iii) Use of Agri. Inputs (Seeds, fertilizers, chemicals, labour etc.)
Intermediate Result(s) (Medium Term)	EFFECT (Purpose/ outcomes)	i) Productivity ii) Production iii) Income
Ultimate Result(s) (Long Term)	IMPACT (Goals)	Overall Socio-Economic Development (Social indicators)

In any project, this sequence (input - output- effect (outcomes) - impact) is in built, ensuring that these steps occur is a primary 'condition' for the success of a CSR project. Again, all CSR projects are made on certain 'assumptions' i.e. if we provide inputs, recipients will use them properly, and produce necessary outputs so that the outputs will result in increased income and the income will boost the standard of living of people. There are also other factors like price fluctuation, changing political environment, etc., which are described as 'risks' that will affect the project outcomes. It is, therefore, necessary to evolve a mechanism in every CSR project that necessary conditions prevail, assumptions come true and effects of risk are reduced by providing cushions for the shock. Such a mechanism is called 'Monitoring'.

2.5 TYPES OF MONITORING

Monitoring can be divided into two types:

2.5.1 Beneficiary Contact Monitoring

It is the key to overall monitoring of CSR projects. Physical and financial monitoring - the first main component of a management information system - generally measures delivery of inputs and services. But CSR services are being accepted and how they are being integrated into development of stakeholders is also important.

Beneficiary contact monitoring is taken up:

*   To maintain records for each activity and to analyse these periodically to monitor the penetration of the services and the establishment of clientele.

*   To establish a regular schedule of surveys to measure the progress of activity and the responses of its beneficiaries. Formal sampling techniques are to be used to get statistically significant data from these surveys.

*   To use informal interviews to record outstanding success stories or problems.

2.5.2 Process Monitoring

As discussed earlier, project implementation begins with deployment of inputs to realize some specific outputs. The conversion of inputs into outputs will involve certain methods, activities and completion of certain events. This happens in a sequence as shown in Box 2.3.

Box 2.3: Process Monitoring

Process: It is the way in which activities are conducted which are continuous and cuts across programmes (e.g., Networking as a process is relevant to other programmes like knowledge management, capacity development, strengthening extension research, curricula reforms and policy

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> **Milestones:** These are a series of achievements that leads to a completion of stage in an activity (an event).
>
> **Activities:** These are what we do to deliver the output. Activities always have a beginning and an end and are associated with a budget.
>
> **Output:** This is what a project delivers before the close of the project.

Process monitoring is an approach that ensures that processes are steered to achieve the desired results and that quality is maintained throughout. Process monitoring would be useful and successful as long as there is a focus, not only on the inputs and outputs, but the way in which the outputs are being delivered, and quality indicators are devised and tracked.

Process monitoring is often confused with conventional progress monitoring. Conventional progress monitoring focuses on physical, financial and logistic aspects of projects, while process monitoring deals with critical processes, which are directly related to the project's objectives (e.g., the progress monitoring looks at the number of capacity building sessions held; while process monitoring evaluates the quality of the sessions,   level of involvement of participants, nature of changes needed to further improve, maximize impact and improve the likelihood of sustainable outcomes). An ideal M&E system contains elements from both progress and process monitoring.

2.6   TECHNIQUES OF MONITORING

Broadly, following techniques are used for the purpose of monitoring:

a. **Regular Progress Reports:** Progress reports should contain physical and financial progress vis-à-vis targets, activities, etc. From the financial and physical progress report, it is often possible to make a rapid assessment of whether, and to what extent, the CSR activities have been fulfilled within the allocated budget.

b. **Monitoring Staff Performance (Review):** Monitoring the CSR department and project staff performance can ensure that individuals are effectively employed to fulfill given tasks. Ideally, all staff should meet regularly, to discuss their progress, and match this against targets and objectives, and discuss problems and possible changes.

c. **Tour Reports / Site Visits:** Most useful information about qualitative aspects of a CSR programme is obtained from the tour reports / site visits submitted by field staff.

d. **Participant Observation:** The CSR department staff may observe the implementation of programmes and activities to obtain sensitive and first-hand insights.

e. **Feedback from Visitors:** The staff ensures that all visitors to the CSR sites and participants in its programmes provide a short feedback on their impressions. (e.g., feedback on CSR activities / outputs / outcomes which will help in further developing the CSR programmes).

f. **Interviews:** Stakeholders should be interviewed on their impressions on CSR programmes and resultant changes.

g. **Participatory Monitoring:** In this, the stakeholders themselves are made partners in monitoring CSR programmes. The CSR department staff and stakeholders discuss and assess the performance together, in order to understand how they have performed, what the problems are and how to overcome.

h. **Key Informants:** In addition to regular stakeholders, CSR department must try to interact with others who may be useful sources of information (e.g. higher officials / policy makers in relevant department).

i. **Complaints / Grievances Petitions:** Complaints and grievances from stakeholders throw some light on the actual performance. Every CSR programme should make provisions for such source of information as part of monitoring.

2.7 MONITORING INDICATORS

Monitoring involves collection of huge amount of data from the CSR projects. All this information have to be analyzed, processed and presented to the management in concise and precise form for decision making. Such a condensed and single piece of information will be called as indicator. Indicators are measures of change. They help us to substantiate the achievements of CSR work through meaningful and trustworthy statements about what has been done and the benefits of that. Such statements may vary vastly from brief quantitative measures (even one number only e.g. percentage) to elaborate verbal description (statement by beneficiaries). Indicators are simplified approximation of achievements or phenomena that are examined (Dale, 2004). Indicators help us to specifically measure the intended levels of input use (quantity, quality and time), he resulting outputs, effects and impacts with reference to planned activities and goals/ objectives. Developing indicators is a necessary pre-condition for effective monitoring of CSR projects.

The indicators that can be used in monitoring CSR programmes are summarised in Box 2.4.

Box 2.4: Indicators in monitoring CSR programmes

Type of Indicators	Description	Indicators Example
Quantitative Indicators	Provide numeric information about a change in a situation due to CSR programme.	Number of Beneficiaries came out of poverty (before and after the programme)
Direct Indicators	Provide information, which expressly relates to what is being measured.	Income generated, crop yield
Indirect Indicators	Essential information, chosen from amongst many types of information to serve as substitutes or proxy indicators for answering questions or responding to statements that are difficult to measure.	To measure the level of poverty in a community, instead of choosing direct indicators for income, indirect indicators for poverty may be chosen, e.g. persons are poor if they have to hire themselves out as daily unskilled labour.
Process Indicators	Information on various processes involved in CSR programme implementation	Processes involved in planning, collaboration with partners, funding, and organizing effective CSR programmes.
Progress Indicators	Seek to measure or monitor changes against stated targets in CSR programmes.	Percentage increase in activities in terms of actions, interactions, collaborations etc (e.g. The number of trees planted, percentage of water supply connections given).
Qualitative Indicators	Largely descriptive statements about processes and outcomes of CSR programmes.	• How community needs are assessed? • Level of participation in CSR programmes. • How decisions are made?

In this section you have read about the concepts, elements and types of monitoring. Now try and answer the questions in Check Your Progress 2.

Check Pour Progress 2

Note : (a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

    (b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1. What is the difference between effectiveness and efficiency of monitoring?

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2. Name different techniques and types of monitoring.

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2.8   LET US SUM UP

Monitoring is an important aspect of project management system. It is a continuous activity for the CSR department. This unit has dealt with in detail why, what, when and who of monitoring and also various types of monitoring. Further a detailed analysis of indicators of monitoring is discussed.

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2.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Monitoring is a process of measuring, recording, collecting, processing and communicating information to assist project management decision-making.

2. Monitoring is useful to realize, is only one of management's sources of information. Management information system needs include six kinds of information: (1) diagnostic information (why a situation is as it is), (2) implementation information (physical and financial or input information), (3) utilization information, (4) impact information, (5) situation information, and (6) information for review.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Effectiveness is the degree to which CSR goals are attained viz., Social goals (e.g., welfare of beneficiaries), Economic goals (e.g., increased income) and Operational goals (e.g., physical and financial targets). Efficiency is usually measured by the rates at which beneficiary target group adopt recommended developmental practices. Adoption rates of varying degrees of complexity can be conceived.

2. Techniques of monitoring includes regular progress report, monitoring staff performance, tour report, participants' observation, and reports from visitors, interviews, participatory monitoring, key informants and complaints or grievances petitions. Monitoring are two types. (i) Beneficiary contact monitoring and (ii) process monitoring.